

**APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CAPTURING AN
INFORMAL IMAGE WITH A DIGITAL CAMERA**

Abstract of the Invention

In a digital camera in a first embodiment, components are added such that when the user operates the switch to acquire an image, the camera provides the external sounds and activity simulating the acquisition 5 of an image, but without actually acquiring a image. The activation of the switch initiates operation of a timing unit. The actual image acquisition is acquired without user input after a preselected time determined by the timing unit. In the second embodiment, activation of a 10 timing unit by switch causes the digital camera to acquire images periodically. The images are transferred to a processing unit where a pattern recognition program examines the acquired image for a preselected feature, such as smile on a face of a subject. When the 15 preselected feature is identified, the digital camera stores the image providing the preselected feature. This invention can be used in the photographing of children.